



# Water Quality NewsFlash

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**Industrial Stormwater Permit – Status** – The current *Industrial Activities Storm Water General Permit* (Water Quality Order 97-03-DWQ) was adopted in 1997. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) held hearings on a revision to this permit in June 2003. The Board held more hearings on a revised draft in January and February of this year. In addition to oral testimony, interested parties submitted 125 comment letters. Persuasive comments were submitted by environmental groups wanting numeric effluent limits and also by permittees concerned that numeric limits are unsuitable. To resolve these conflicts, the SWRCB is considering the option of contracting with a third party and setting up a panel of experts to determine the feasibility of quantitative limits. This process could take a year or more. A possible model that has been suggested is the Washington State industrial stormwater permit. The Washington permit provides for quantitative limits for industrial stormwater discharges into waterways listed as impaired (i.e., on the 303(d) list) but initially requires only BMPs for discharges to other waterways. The Washington permit includes a list of benchmarks, but with fewer constituents than the benchmark list in the California proposal. Continued failure to achieve the Washington benchmarks can lead to requirements to install treatment facilities. Comment letters (including Caltrans) <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/stormwtr/indcommentsdb.html>  
Washington permit: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/industrial/index.html#Download>

**Tahoe – Caltrans testing activated alumina for roadway runoff** – A recent article high-lighted the Department's testing of innovative methods to remove pollutants in highway runoff. The program has tested various filter media including activated alumina (\$0.70 /lb.), which has been shown to be effective at reducing sediment to very low levels. More information on Caltrans testing of alternative media and chemically enhanced settling can be found in the following documents: CTSW-RT-03-042 and CTSW-RT-03-079.31.37. Both are available (see "Tahoe") at: <http://svhqsg4.dot.ca.gov/hq/env/stormwater/special/newsetup/index.htm>

**San Francisco Bay Mercury TMDL – State Board delays approval** – The San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board is preparing a Mercury TMDL for San Francisco Bay. The Regional Board has worked closely with the Clean Estuary Partnership (CEP), a collaborative including stormwater agencies, sewage treatment facilities, and others discharging to the Bay. The TMDL went before the State Water Resources Control Board for approval March 16 but was rejected. The State Board was concerned that major contributing sources such as the Central Valley (Sacramento/San Joaquin Rivers) and the Guadalupe River (mercury mines) were not appropriately included in the SF Bay TMDL process. These two sources together contribute 63% of the new mercury loading (urban stormwater contributes most of the rest). Additionally, environmental groups objected that the TMDL was not strict enough and U.S. EPA objected that the plan would not assure compliance with the current mercury standards for the Bay. The mercury TMDL could be delayed a year or more. Rejected TMDL resolution: [http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/agendas/2005/march/0316\\_08.pdf](http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/agendas/2005/march/0316_08.pdf)

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